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Chairman:	Mr. von WAGNER	(Germany)
later:	Mr. PONCE (Vice-Chairman)	(Ecuador)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

GENERAL DEBATE ON ALL DISARMAMENT AND INTERNATIONAL SECURITY ITEMS (continued)

1. Mr. FOSTERVOLL (Norway) said that there was now an opportunity to build peace in the Middle East thanks to the courage and wisdom of the Israeli and Palestinian leaders and a need for collective political and financial efforts to consolidate their historic breakthrough and help to move the process forward. Arms control and disarmament remained an indispensable part of such a broad approach. The aim should be to introduce measures to build confidence and security which would contribute to transparency, predictability and crisis management. It was essential to draw on the experience and lessons of other regional arms-control negotiations. The Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) was a useful example in that regard. It was to be hoped that the building of confidence in the Middle East would also help to lower the level of armaments in the region and to channel vitally needed resources to economic and social development.

2. To halt the spread of weapons of mass destruction in all its aspects remained the main challenge. The outcome of the forthcoming conference to review the operation of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons was of utmost importance. The Treaty should be further strengthened and remain in force indefinitely. A cause for great concern in that connection was the refusal of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to comply fully with the safeguards obligations which it had entered into with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). Norway had also repeatedly expressed its concern that Ukraine had not yet ratified the START-I Treaty or acceded to the Non-Proliferation Treaty. It urged Ukraine to accede to the Non-Proliferation Treaty without delay or prior conditions as a non-nuclear-weapon State, in accordance with the Lisbon Protocol.

3. The Non-Proliferation Treaty was an essential but not sufficient condition for the prevention of the further proliferation of nuclear weapons. It must become the centre-piece of a broader regime for cooperation among nuclear-weapon and non-nuclear-weapon States. In that connection Norway welcomed President Clinton's support for the conclusion of an international agreement banning the production of plutonium and highly enriched uranium for weapons purposes.

4. Until the conventions banning chemical and biological weapons were fully implemented by all States, export-control measures remained an important means of preventing the proliferation of dual-use chemical and biological products. The guidelines of the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR), which all States should adopt, were an essential mechanism for preventing the spread of missile technology capable of delivering weapons of mass destruction.

5. There now seemed to be a real possibility of concluding a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty. The nuclear-weapon States carried the main responsibility for that undertaking. Norway deeply regretted the decision of the Chinese Government to carry out an underground nuclear test. The resumption of testing by any of the nuclear Powers would seriously undermine the

(Mr. Fostervoll, Norway)

negotiating process and create doubts as to whether they were being conducted in good faith.

6. The signature of the Convention banning chemical weapons had been a triumph for the multilateral disarmament negotiations. Norway had ratified the Convention and called on other States to take the necessary steps to ensure its entry into force in January 1995. Norway was ready to play its part in a broad international effort to secure the timely and safe implementation of the provisions of the Convention and, in particular, to assist in the destruction of chemical weapons which might be located close to its territory.

7. In the area of conventional armaments, the Treaty on Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) was a cornerstone of the new European security structure. Recent developments, in particular the upsurge of regional armed conflicts at the southern periphery of the former Soviet Union, had given rise to demands for a revision of the CFE Treaty. That was not the right way to proceed. Any revision of the Treaty must take place in accordance with its own provisions and certainly not earlier than the time specified therein.

8. Norway regretted that the Conference on Disarmament had not yet been able to reach consensus on the question of the enlargement of its membership. The introduction of new members would strengthen the position of the Conference as a multilateral negotiating body and its legitimacy and credibility.

9. Mr. Ponce (Ecuador), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

10. Mr. BOTEZ (Romania) said that the issues of arms control and disarmament were only components of a more comprehensive concept of international stability and security, and that disarmament was only one of the means of guaranteeing international security. Now that the irreconcilable confrontation between East and West was over, it was necessary to decide how to define what international security meant and how to ensure its maintenance in the post-cold-war period. The collapse of the transnational ideology of Marxism-Leninism had opened the road to conflicting ethnic and religious fundamentalist tendencies. The failure of the totalitarian guarantor of the large majority of European communist regimes - the USSR - and the failure of totalitarianism in general in Central and Eastern Europe had created new and fragile democratic States in which new forms of destabilizing civil intolerance and political extremism had become possible. Amidst the increasing disorder and crisis of confidence in neighbouring countries Romania remained an island of stability and peace, but the divergent tendencies in Europe were creating serious problems for its security. In an interconnected world, security problems in Europe had consequences far beyond the bounds of Europe. In that connection, the so-called North-South dialogue was gaining in significance in the contemporary world.

11. It was worth repeating that only a direct dialogue in which all of "we, the peoples", in the words of the Charter, participated on a democratic basis could make it possible to define in concrete terms what "security" and "stability" meant for different regions and times, and what was to be done to achieve them. The recent extraordinary events in South Africa and the Middle East fully bore

(Mr. Botez, Romania)

out that assertion. It only remained to be hoped that the world community would be able to extrapolate and apply in practice these new forms of conflict definition, control and resolution.

12. After so many years of totalitarian nightmare it was perfectly natural that the new democratic Romania should be extremely sensitive to such concepts as diversity and choice. Romania fully understood the unavoidable reality of the clash of interests in the world and believed that it was essential to devise a new philosophy to ensure stability and security on the basis of cooperation at the local and continental levels. Romania was determined to remain a point of stability in its troubled region. Building on its European traditions, it had recently joined the Council of Europe and, as a member of the North Atlantic Cooperation Council, it wanted to consolidate its ties with the Alliance structures under any institutional formula of association offered to the countries of Central Europe, including full membership of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). The achievement of that strategic objective should provide long-term guarantees for Romania's organic development in the spirit of its genuine historical tradition.

13. Romania's first concern in the matter of arms control and disarmament was nuclear arms control and disarmament. It was convinced that implementation of both START-I and START-II as well as the Lisbon Protocol was of vital importance. It welcomed the suspension of all nuclear tests and deplored any discontinuity in that respect. It strongly supported the unconditional and indefinite extension in 1995 of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and took an active part in the international cooperation for combating the spread of all weapons of mass destruction. It had signed the Convention on Chemical Weapons (CCW) and attached great importance to the implementation of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe. Transparency in armaments remained one of its main concerns and it considered such transparency a necessary condition for decreasing the feelings of suspicion and confrontation inherited from the past.

14. The old adage that one should "think globally, but act locally", was fully met by the "Guidelines and recommendations for regional approaches to disarmament within the context of global security" prepared by the United Nations Disarmament Commission. The report of the Conference on Disarmament reflected serious efforts to renew and strengthen that important body. One of the most promising items of an updated agenda for the Conference could be the question of transparency in armaments. The idea of an international code of conduct regarding transparency in armaments could also be best dealt with in the Conference.

15. The new problems emerging from the end of the "cold war" demanded new goals and organizational structures for the United Nations. With regard to the First Committee, the question arose of whether its agenda was not overcharged and how many of its items remained relevant. Some progress had been made in "cleaning" the agenda but there was still a great deal of inertia which further efforts and perseverance were required to overcome.

16. Obviously, to rethink the entire Organization, when resources were limited and goals still fuzzy, was a much more difficult task. To accomplish it

(Mr. Botez, Romania)

required the same pragmatic and realistic spirit: it was necessary to meet today the challenges of the future. Only in that way could representatives rise to the level of their predecessors of 1945, who had designed a world organization able to meet international challenges for almost 50 years. It was necessary to examine alternative scenarios of world dynamics for the decades to come. To the "preventive diplomacy" so eloquently advocated by the Secretary-General must be added a preventive, or, more generally, an anticipatory design.

17. His delegation considered that it was counterproductive to remain intoxicated with the past in approaching the different proposals for the restructuring of the United Nations, including the Security Council. What was necessary at present was to construct an organization flexible enough to meet the yet unknown challenges of the next 50 years. That was no easy task, for it was necessary first to discover the stable axis of world evolution and then to develop appropriate tools to meet the coming tasks. It was in that context of looking to the future that Romania had decided to support Germany and Japan as legitimate candidates for permanent membership in the Security Council.

18. Mr. TOTH (Hungary), speaking as Chairman of the Ad Hoc Group of Governmental Experts to identify and examine potential verification measures from a scientific and technical standpoint, said that the Third Review Conference of the Biological Weapons Convention, determined to strengthen the effectiveness and improve the implementation of the Convention and recognizing that effective verification could reinforce the Convention, had decided to establish the Ad Hoc Group of Governmental Experts open to all States parties to identify and examine potential verification measures from a scientific and technical standpoint.

19. As a result of four sessions, held between March 1992 and September 1993, the Ad Hoc Group of Governmental Experts had fulfilled its mandate and adopted a consensus report on its work. The measures identified had been grouped in seven broad categories. Off-site measures included information monitoring; data exchange; remote sensing and inspection. On-site measures consisted of exchange visits; inspections and continuous monitoring.

20. While recognizing the possible utility of other methodologies, the Group had agreed to use one methodology to assess illustrative but not exhaustive examples of various combinations of measures. Five combinations had been proposed as examples to illustrate the evaluation of enhanced capabilities and limitations: (1) declarations/multilateral information sharing/satellite surveillance/visual inspection; (2) information monitoring; (3) on-site inspection; (4) declarations/multilateral information-sharing/on-site visual inspection and (5) declarations/information monitoring.

21. The Group had decided by consensus to prepare a paper reporting the results of consultations on the question of types and quantities of agents. According to the paper, agreed lists, which were difficult to construct at the current stage, were a prerequisite to the implementation of many potential verification measures. The Group had examined the potential verification measures in terms, inter alia, of their impact on scientific research, scientific cooperation, industrial development and other permitted activities.

(Mr. Toth, Hungary)

22. The findings of the Group concerning the identification, examination and evaluation of the 21 potential verification measures against the agreed mandated criteria indicated that capabilities and limitations existed for each measure in varying degrees, although reliance could not be placed on any single measure by itself to determine whether a State Party was engaging in prohibited activities.

23. The identified verification measures covered a variety of non-intrusive and intrusive measures. The Group had described the capabilities and limitations of the measures and evaluated their impact on scientific research, scientific cooperation, industrial development and other permitted activities and their implications for the confidentiality of commercial proprietary information from a scientific and technical standpoint only. It was difficult to assess accurately the feasibility and effectiveness of all the measures within the context and criteria laid down in the Group's mandate. Concerns were expressed over the financial implications and the technical difficulties in the identification of biological agents as well as the need to ensure that sensitive commercial proprietary information and national security needs were protected in the implementation of any measure.

24. Mr. LISUCH (Slovakia) said that the current session was of historic significance for his country, as it was the first time independent Slovakia, one of the youngest Members of the United Nations, had had an opportunity to express itself in the First Committee on the entire range of issues involving arms control, disarmament, global stability and international security.

25. At the beginning of the 1990s a fundamental shift had taken place in the global order established at the end of the Second World War. As a result of the political changes most realists had abandoned the scholastic view of a bipolar world and begun to be aware of its complexity and multipolarity. The speed with which former enemies had become allies seeking peaceful and mutually favourable solutions to sensitive global and regional problems encouraged optimism. But the same developments had resulted in a resurgence of chaos in some regions of the world.

26. The European continent was laying the foundation for a new global stability. The Helsinki process was one of the ways to achieve the goals set. The world was witnessing the rapid adaptation of European and transatlantic institutions and organizations, which were increasingly engaging in mutual cooperation to resolve current problems. The Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) provided an important link between European and global security. It should therefore cooperate closely with the United Nations, particularly in preventing and resolving conflicts. Slovakia shared the opinion that cooperation between the United Nations and CSCE would be another positive step towards greater collaboration between existing international structures, which would enable the international community not only to adopt adequate measures but also to avoid duplication of the activities of those structures, thus enhancing the effectiveness of the use of human and material resources. At present, CSCE had no extensive experience in the field of peace-keeping operations, which traditionally remained the domain of the United Nations. However, there was still a considerable amount of work for CSCE to do, primarily

(Mr. Lisuch, Slovakia)

in the area of preventive diplomacy and the settlement of political conflicts. Successful and effective cooperation between the United Nations and CSCE could set a precedent for other regional organizations to follow.

27. Slovakia, which supported activities relating to disarmament and regarded the Conference on Disarmament as the most representative forum in that field, had applied for membership in the Conference. His country had succeeded to all agreements concerning arms control and disarmament signed by the former Czechoslovakia and had signed the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction. It regarded the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons as the cornerstone of all current efforts aimed at reinforcing the non-proliferation regime and fully supported the idea of extending that Treaty indefinitely.

28. Slovakia welcomed the initiative of the United States of America, the Russian Federation and France to extend the nuclear test moratorium, which it regarded as a positive response to long years of insistent appeals by the international community. The moratorium was the first step towards negotiations on the total prohibition of all nuclear arms tests in all environments. The extension of the nuclear test moratorium was an indication that verification of nuclear arms was possible by methods other than detection of nuclear explosions. His country was prepared to participate in the drafting of the text of a global agreement banning all nuclear tests. His delegation supported all proposals regarding a total ban on nuclear tests both above ground and underground, and fully endorsed the idea that the thirtieth anniversary of the signing of the partial test-ban Treaty should herald the arrival of a new era, free of all nuclear test explosions.

29. The shift in the field of nuclear disarmament was accompanied by another element which his country considered important for the international community. The existing so-called "negative security assurances" were no longer consistent with the contemporary military and political situation. Unfortunately, the disintegration of military blocs had not led to the desired shift in the understanding of nuclear assurances. Such assurances should be set out in a legally binding document which would be global in scope, uniform, unconditional and comprehensive. His country supported the establishment of non-nuclear zones in various parts of the world. Furthermore, the question of so-called "positive security assurances" should not be forgotten. Security Council resolution 255 (1968) should be updated to include an explicit obligation to provide assistance and support to non-nuclear States should they become victimized by aggression.

30. His delegation commended the recent work of the Ad Hoc Group of Governmental Experts to Identify and Examine Possible Verification Measures in relation to the Biological Weapons Convention, and regarded the Group's report as the beginning of a dialogue which should ultimately result in adequate and cost-effective verification of the stipulations of the Convention.

31. Mr. AZIKIWE (Nigeria) said that, since 1988, remarkable progress had been achieved in disarmament negotiations at both the bilateral and the multilateral levels, for example, the successful conclusion of the START-I and START-II Treaties by the United States and the Soviet Union and, later, the Russian Federation. However, those two countries still had more warheads in their arsenals than they had before the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. Nigeria believed that bilateral agreements should complement efforts to conclude multilateral agreements and that the United Nations should assume a key role in negotiations to that end.

32. The Convention on Chemical Weapons was an example of a successful agreement negotiated in a multilateral framework. He welcomed measures taken by the Preparatory Commission for the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. His country, which had had the privilege of serving as the first Chairman of the Preparatory Commission, appealed to all States which had not yet done so to sign the Convention and thus make it universal.

33. Nigeria welcomed the decision of the Conference on Disarmament to commence the long-awaited negotiations on a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban Treaty in January 1994. It believed that it would be most useful to identify and build a consensus on the objective criteria that must be met. Given the importance it attached to a comprehensive test ban, in particular because of its relationship to non-proliferation, Nigeria called for a speedy conclusion of the treaty by 1994. At the same time, the Amendment Conference of States Parties to the partial test-ban Treaty should continue to conduct parallel negotiations. His delegation welcomed the nuclear test moratorium announced by some nuclear-weapon States and appealed to all nuclear-weapon States to refrain from any action that might undermine that positive development.

34. In May 1993, the preparatory committee for the 1995 Conference of the States Parties to the Non-Proliferation Treaty had held its first session. Although much had been achieved at that session, difficult procedural and substantive problems remained. As the 1995 Conference approached, it should be borne in mind that its primary objective was both the review and the extension of the NPT. There was a need to examine how far the Treaty had prevented or failed to prevent the horizontal, as well as the vertical, spread of nuclear weapons; whether States parties to the Treaty had fulfilled their obligations; how to encourage States which were not parties to the Treaty to accede to it; and what security assurances should be given to those States which had forsworn the option of possessing nuclear weapons. Nigeria believed that non-nuclear States parties to the Treaty should be given assurances against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons by nuclear-weapon States through a legally binding agreement. Since the number of States parties to the Non-Proliferation Treaty had increased - while some fears of the effects of the free market in nuclear technology and the movement of highly skilled personnel might have been exaggerated - there were some questions that needed to be resolved regarding weaknesses in the multilateral non-proliferation regime, including the IAEA safeguards.

35. Since 1964, the African States had made strenuous efforts to denuclearize the continent. At present, a Group of Experts was drafting a treaty to that end. His delegation appreciated the assistance given to the Group of Experts

(Mr. Azikiwe, Nigeria)

and urged the United Nations not to relax its efforts until the Group had completed its mandate. It looked forward to the early conclusion of the treaty and its entry into force.

36. The guidelines and recommendations for regional approaches to disarmament within the context of global security, which had been unanimously adopted at the 1993 session of the Disarmament Commission, were timely and offered a useful framework for confidence-building, the de-escalation of tension and the implementation of practical disarmament measures at the regional level. However, the effectiveness of the guidelines depended on whether Powers outside the region respected regional agreements and refrained from arms exports that could destabilize peace in the region.

37. Since the United Nations had adopted new priorities in the area of disarmament and international security, the work of the United Nations regional centres for peace and disarmament should be reoriented accordingly. Their mandates should be expanded to enable them to carry out studies and seminars in the area of conflict management and peace-building, and their financial problems should be addressed.

38. The presence in the First Committee of current beneficiaries of the United Nations disarmament fellowship, training and advisory services programme, as observers, and of many graduates of the programme as representatives of their States bore witness to the programme's importance and vitality. As in previous years, that programme must be given proper financing.

39. Mr. SUCHARIPA (Austria) said that the numerous agreements concluded during the cold war era had responded to the problems of a bipolar world: stopping the arms race, controlling the danger of weapons of mass destruction and reducing the threat of war between the super-Powers. At the current stage, however, it was intra-State rather than inter-State conflicts which prevailed. The shift in the perception of threat had led to a broadened concept of international security, including both military and economic, social, ethnic, environmental and human rights aspects and their complex interrelationship. Accordingly, future peace and security structures must be based on two elements: reduced military expenditure and the building of universal economic, social and environmental security.

40. It had been argued that the opportunities created by the end of the cold war had not been fully utilized and that the world had become neither safer nor more stable. Since that time, however, important global and regional disarmament agreements had been concluded: the Treaty on the Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms (START-II) in 1993, the Convention on Chemical Weapons in 1992, the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE Treaty) in 1990 and the CFE-1A Agreement in 1992. In addition to specific disarmament measures, those agreements also stipulated specific procedures for their implementation and introduced rules of conduct for relations between States, thus creating a basis for the disarmament and arms control process for the present and the immediate future. It was vital that those agreements were adhered to.

(Mr. Sucharipa, Austria)

41. The outbreak of a third world war now looked highly unlikely, a number of regional conflicts in Latin America, Asia and Africa had been settled and, with the recent conclusion of an agreement between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), the peace process in the Middle East had taken a major step forward. Global military spending had dropped and savings in that area could well amount to US$ 1.5 trillion by the year 2000. The resources thus released provided an opportunity for the creation of new structures for peace and comprehensive security. The 1992 Human Development Report suggested that the rich nations should direct more resources to their lengthening social agenda and to assisting poorer countries, while the developing countries should invest more in the health and education of their people.

42. The multilateral disarmament machinery and the international system of security organizations had been created for the settlement of inter-State, not intra-State conflicts. In order to be able to deal effectively with the settlement of intra-State conflicts, the international system for conflict resolution and the multilateral arms control and disarmament agenda would have to be updated accordingly. At the same time, closer attention must be given to such issues as non-proliferation, the dismantling and destruction of weapons, the environmental aspects of disarmament and the conversion of military production. Existing security structures must be refashioned for preventive diplomacy and pre-emptive measures. The necessary integration of regional and global efforts must be based on close cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations such as the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the Western European Union (WEU) and others. His delegation supported growing efforts aimed at conflict resolution, preventive diplomacy, peacemaking and peace-keeping. It welcomed the statement by the Secretary-General in his report entitled "New dimensions of arms regulation and disarmament in the post-cold-war era" (A/C.1/47/7), that the time had come for the integration of disarmament and arms regulation issues into the broader structure of the international peace and security agenda.

43. While it agreed that arms control and disarmament were an integral part of peacekeeping, peacemaking and peace-building, Austria believed that work should also continue on traditional priority issues. Despite favourable developments, nuclear weapons maintained their prominence on the international disarmament agenda. The multilateral disarmament machinery must make increased efforts to secure the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, to stop the qualitative nuclear-arms race and to reduce the remaining nuclear arsenals.

44. The emergence of those new challenges to the non-proliferation regime had coincided with preparations for the 1995 NPT Review Conference. The breakup of the Soviet Union had raised questions about the future control of nuclear arsenals which had suddenly been removed from centralized command. Austria welcomed the recent accession of Belarus to the Non-Proliferation Treaty and strongly encouraged Ukraine and Kazakhstan to comply with the 1992 Lisbon Protocol and to adhere to the NPT as non-nuclear-weapon States as soon as possible. It also took note of the decision by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to suspend its withdrawal from the NPT and urged it to comply with the IAEA safeguards obligations. Austria was in favour of the further strengthening

(Mr. Sucharipa, Austria)

of the effectiveness and transparency of the IAEA safeguards. The right of IAEA to conduct special inspections of any site, even sites which had not been placed under Agency safeguards, must be reaffirmed. It also favoured a more comprehensive reporting system on nuclear imports and exports, with a view to ensuring that nuclear materials and equipment for peaceful purposes were not diverted to military use.

45. In June 1992, the Austrian Parliament had called for an immediate stop to nuclear testing, even before the conclusion of the relevant international treaty. The de facto moratorium on nuclear tests, the absence of testing for more than a year and the consensus decision by the Conference on Disarmament to commence negotiations on a comprehensive test-ban treaty (CTBT) in January 1994, had all raised the hopes of the international community. There was therefore, all the more reason to regret that China had conducted a nuclear test and to hope that it would be an isolated event and would not lead to the resumption of testing by other nuclear-weapon States.

46. The widespread support for the Convention on Chemical Weapons, which had been signed by 150 States and ratified by four, augured well for the achievement of universal adherence to the Convention, a precondition for its full implementation. Austria highly commended the effective steps taken by the Provisional Technical Secretariat to put into place the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, which would have to commence its functions by the time the Convention came into effect, which it hoped would be by the beginning of 1995.

47. With regard to biological weapons, Austria had expressed concern over the lack of verification procedures in the Biological Weapons Convention. It had therefore welcomed the decision of the Third Review Conference of the Biological Weapons Convention to convene, as a first step, an Ad Hoc Group of Governmental Experts to identify and examine possible verification measures. The report of the Group of Experts seemed to constitute a sound basis for the future elaboration of a verification mechanism which could ensure compliance with the Convention.

48. While considerable progress had been made in controlling the spread of weapons of mass destruction, conventional weapons were being used to cause loss of life and material destruction in the territory of the former Yugoslavia, and in other regions as well. The issue of transparency in armaments had occupied a central place in the Committee's deliberations during previous sessions and the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms had been set up in the hope that transparency might lead to future restraint in arms transfers. Austria shared the positive assessment of the Register by the Secretary-General in his report on the work of the Organization. Confidence could be further increased by the expansion of the scope of the Register and consideration of problems related to the transfer of high technology with military applications and to weapons of mass destruction.

49. The Conference on Disarmament was conducting consultations on the expansion of its membership with a view to improving its efficiency as the sole multilateral body for disarmament negotiations. The list of States to be

(Mr. Sucharipa, Austria)

admitted as full members of the Conference included Austria. Austria, which had actively participated in the work of the Conference as an observer since 1979 and had applied for full membership as early as 1982, was very pleased at the prospect of finally becoming a full member. Although the Conference on Disarmament had not been able to reach a consensus on the expansion of its membership, Austria hoped to be accepted as a full member by the beginning of the 1994 session.

50. Mr. PALLAIS (Nicaragua), speaking on behalf of the Central American States, said that, with the end of the cold war, the international community was faced with new tasks - the elimination of poverty and deprivation throughout the world and the removal of the sources of economic inequality. The successes achieved in the area of disarmament, including the reduction of military budgets, made it possible to transfer attention to meeting vital needs in the area of social and economic development.

51. With regard to General Assembly resolution 47/52 L, he noted that two Central American countries had already provided information for the Register of Conventional Arms, acting in the spirit of a policy of full transparency and striving to attain such goals as the demilitarization of Central America and the promotion of general and complete disarmament. Prompted by the same considerations, the Central American countries had signed the Convention on Chemical Weapons. In view of the importance of the question of transparency in armaments, they supported Colombia's request for the inclusion of that topic in the agenda of the organizational session of the Conference on Disarmament in December 1993. Furthermore, they welcomed the recent decision of the nuclear Powers to extend unilaterally the moratorium on nuclear tests and their commitment to the conclusion of a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty.

52. The Central American countries commended the work of the Amendment Conference of States Parties to the partial nuclear-test-ban Treaty and endorsed the decision of the Conference on Disarmament to give its Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear Test Ban a mandate to negotiate a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty.

53. In Central America, a process of radical restructuring was under way in the area of regional security. In the past, the concept of "security" had had a purely military meaning: national security doctrines had been designed to combat subversive activity without taking into account the economic and social roots of conflicts. Thus, a fragmented system of security had developed which only partially met the aspirations of the peoples of Central America.

54. The new concept of security in Central America was based on the coordination of efforts in the political, economic and social fields and in the field of development. That comprehensive concept was currently gaining increasing recognition. It was based on nine inextricably linked elements: the elimination of poverty; the consolidation of democracy; respect for human rights; the fight against drug trafficking; the establishment of a new environmental order; education and culture to educate the peoples in a spirit of

(Mr. Pallais, Nicaragua)

peace; a solution to external debt problems; access to international markets on just terms; and genuine and complete disarmament.

55. Following the signing by the Central American countries of the Esquipulas Agreements, which provided for the conclusion of an agreement on arms and military personnel, a Security Commission had been established. It had laid down specific objectives for future negotiations, worked out confidence-building measures between States, established a mechanism for monitoring compliance with agreements and introduced a system of maximum levels of weapons and armed forces. Recently the Commission had approved a preliminary mechanism for assistance, cooperation and coordination in the elimination of illicit transfers of arms in Central America, and it was currently working on a draft agreement on regional security.

56. With regard to the demilitarization of Central America, despite the difficulties involved, considerable success had been achieved: one example was the significant reduction in the military budget of Nicaragua. Moreover, the President of Nicaragua had recently formulated a concept regarding the role of the armed forces in a democratic society.

57. In El Salvador, with the end of the armed conflict and the fulfilment of the obligations deriving from the peace agreements, changes had taken place in the military sphere: the Frente Farabundo Martí para la Liberación Nacional (FMLN) had been converted from a military group to a political organization and the armed forces had been reorganized. The Government of Honduras had reduced its armed forces and reassigned military units to civilian activities, particularly in the environmental and agricultural sectors. Those steps had naturally led to a considerable reduction of armaments.

58. The countries of Central America had made considerable progress towards the conclusion of a regional agreement on armed forces and armaments. They had already reached agreement on the basic concepts and forms of activity which would be included in that regional agreement.

59. Referring to the need to form a new democratic culture and to eradicate violence, he stressed the importance of formulating programmes to disseminate the ideas of peace, disarmament and the settlement of disputes through negotiation among the inhabitants of Central America.

60. As past experience showed, international security could be achieved only through the joint efforts of all the countries of the world, and its basic components were development, peace and democracy.

61. Mr. CHOWDHURY (Bangladesh) said, although the era of ideological confrontation was over, other forms of conflict had re-emerged, rooted in religious, linguistic, ethnic, economic and cultural differences between peoples. They posed a serious threat to peace and new modalities must be evolved to address those issues. The Committee's task was therefore greater rather than less. Its best approach in the circumstances was to take up issues in specific areas of inter-State relations.

(Mr. Chowdhury, Bangladesh)

62. One such area was nuclear non-proliferation. Bangladesh, as a party to the Non-Proliferation Treaty, stressed the need to strengthen the Treaty and remove its imperfections. A suitable forum for that would be the 1995 Review Conference, and the recently concluded Convention on Chemical Weapons should serve as a model. Bangladesh supported the idea of concluding a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty and hoped that agreement on it would be reached by 1994. It was absolutely essential to conclude effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons.

63. In the case of conventional arms control it was essential to focus attention on the interrelated aspects of the excessive and destabilizing accumulation of arms and to elaborate universal and non-discriminatory means of enhancing openness in the matter. Transparency, restraint, responsible policies and good-neighbourly behaviour were essential elements of the consolidation of regional and global stability, security and peace.

64. That was why Bangladesh was committed to the concepts of nuclear-free zones and zones of peace and believed that it was possible to build concentric circles of such zones to embrace the entire globe. Agreements on such zones must be concluded by consensus.

65. In an effort to make its contribution to the negotiations on disarmament issues Bangladesh had applied for membership of the Conference on Disarmament. It was in favour of an early decision on the expansion of the Conference's membership.

66. Confidence-building measures had a most positive impact on the consolidation of stability. One such measure might be the establishment of broad regional cooperation. Similarly, development was a great peace-maker. Surely now was the time for a peace dividend to be used to strengthen peace. As a least developed country, Bangladesh knew from its own experience what a big impetus additional resources could provide.

67. Mr. PALWANKAR (Observer for the International Committee of the Red Cross) emphasized the importance of the proposal to hold a conference to review the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects, since such a conference would give States an opportunity - for the first time since the entry into force of the Convention in 1983 - to assess its impact and decide whether it needed to be amended in order to become more effective. The Convention had been adopted in 1980 as a result of various compromises. A number of issues which had been brought up by States were not covered in the text: in several cases because they were felt to be premature, and in others because further research was needed. The text had been intentionally adopted in the form of a convention with three protocols in order to enable States to add additional protocols dealing with different types of weapon as they were developed.

68. The forthcoming review conference would offer a unique opportunity to take stock of the use of conventional weapons in the contemporary world, to consider

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whether the existing provisions provided adequate answers to existing problems and to look more carefully at the likely development of new types of weapon. In view of the increasing number of local conflicts in which the parties involved had access to the weapons available in the market and used them largely in an indiscriminate manner, States might consider whether the Convention's restriction of the use of weapons was really sufficient. Furthermore, in view of the close link between weapons use, trade and ownership, States should also consider a ban on the manufacture and export of those types of weapon which had excessively damaging or indiscriminate effects.

69. Careful thought should also be given to the fact that at present the Convention applied formally only to international armed conflicts, although the majority of conflicts were internal. Another important aspect of ensuring the effectiveness of a treaty was the means of its implementation, means which were noticeably lacking in the existing Convention.

70. The review conference provided an opportunity to assess whether the provisions of the existing Protocols were in fact adequate. Mines were the problem causing the greatest concern to the international community. ICRC could not but approve of the desire to find an effective solution to the appalling situation resulting from the massive and indiscriminate use of mines. In January 1994 it would be convening a meeting of military experts to study in greater detail the military utility of different types of mine and to consider possible alternative systems. The symposium on anti-personnel mines held in April 1993 had noted that that Protocol II, even if it was observed, had important shortcomings. It had proposed that serious thought should be given to a total ban on the use of certain types of mine. ICRC hoped that the valuable work done at such symposiums would be taken fully into account during the review conference.

71. States could also consider the possibility of regulating existing types of weapon which were not yet covered by the Convention. Where the development of new types of weapon was concerned, States were already in principle under an obligation to assess whether the use of a weapon under development would in some or all circumstances violate international humanitarian law. The adoption of preventive measures relating to the possible prohibition of types of weapon which had not yet been fielded would seem to make sense, for it would save enormous problems at a later stage. Accordingly, ICRC had held a series of expert meetings between 1989 and 1991 on the subject of blinding weapons. It had been motivated to convene the meetings by reports concerning the development of certain types of laser weapon which caused permanent and incurable blindness when used against persons over a range of about a kilometre. The majority of experts thought that the treaty regulation of such types of weapon would be advisable. It would also be possible to discuss more generally, in the light of the standards of humanitarian law, trends in future weaponry such as different types of directed-energy weapons.

72. In view of its mandate to work for the application and development of international humanitarian law, the importance of which had been recognized in paragraph 5 of General Assembly resolution 47/56, ICRC attached great importance

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to its participation on an equal footing in the work of the review conference. In particular, it could make documentation available and believed that, given its first-hand experience of the realities of armed conflicts and its long experience in the development of international humanitarian law, it could make an extremely valuable contribution.

73. ICRC hoped that the States which had not yet done so would ratify or accede to the Convention as quickly as possible. An increase in the number of parties would help to ensure that the forthcoming review conference would be as effective and productive as possible.

The meeting rose at 5.30 p.m.